DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 473 616 CG 032 232

AUTHOR Gorton, Laura; McCauley, Joyce; Farrell, Debi; Nyce, Susan; Johnson, Lisa; Covert, Stephanie; Strauss, Aviva; Maggi, Leigh; Fields, Susan; Eddy, Preethy; Denis, Lauren; Hemperly, Megan; Fronheiser, April; Chambliss, Catherine

TITLE The Relationship between Maternal Employment and Preadolescents' Attitudes and Ambitions.

PUB DATE 2003-00-00

NOTE 17p.

PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Research (143)

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *Employed Parents; *Junior High School Students; *Mothers; *Occupational Aspiration; Parent Child Relationship; Predictor Variables; *Student Attitudes

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of maternal employment on perceptions of the costs and benefits to children associated with mothers' working outside the home and professional ambition among junior high school adolescents. A sample of 151 suburban and urban junior high school students completed a questionnaire relating to their professional ambitions and preference for having children. One way ANOVA revealed that maternal non-employment was associated with students' perceiving maternal employment as imposing greater costs to children. No group differences in perceived benefits with maternal employment were observed. Analyses were also conducted to determine the relationship of maternal employment during different stages of the child's life and gender upon the child's attitudes and professional ambitions. A significant gender main effect was found for level of occupational ambition. Female students reported a higher level of ambition than their male counterparts. Maternal employment during infancy and preschool years was not significantly associated with level of professional ambition. However, maternal employment during the elementary school years did related significantly to students' occupational aspirations. (Contains 73 references.) (GCP)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original document.

The Relationship Between Maternal Employment and Preadolescents' Attitudes and Ambitions

Laura Gorton, Joyce McCauley, Debi Farrell, Susan Nyce, Lisa Johnson,
Stephanie Covert, Aviva Strauss, Leigh Maggi, Susan Fields
Preethy Eddy, Lauren Denis, Megan Hemperly
April Fronheiser and Catherine Chambliss, Ph.D.

Ursinus College

2003

ED 473 616

Abstract

This study investigated the influence of maternal employment on perceptions of the costs and benefits to children associated with mothers' working outside the home and professional ambition among junior high school adolescents. A sample of 151 suburban and urban junior high school students completed a questionnaire relating to their professional ambitions and preference for having children. Oneway ANOVA (maternal employment during infancy: non-employment, part time employment, and fulltime employment) revealed that maternal non-employment was associated with students' perceiving maternal employment as imposing greater costs to children. No group differences in perceived benefits associated with maternal employment were observed.

Three 3x2 MANOVA were conducted to determine the relationship of maternal employment (full-time, part-time, non-employment) during different stages of the child's life (infancy, preschool, and elementary school years) and gender upon the child's attitudes and professional ambitions. A significant gender main effect was found for level of occupational ambition. Female students reported a higher level of ambition than their male counterparts (females: mean=1.35, s.d.=.60, n=46 versus males: mean=1.64, s.d.=.71, n=45; F=4.18, df=1/86, $p<.05$). Maternal employment during infancy and preschool years was not significantly associated with level of professional ambition. However, maternal employment during the elementary school years did relate significantly to students' occupational aspirations. Respondents whose mothers were employed fulltime during their elementary school-age years showed a significantly higher level of professional ambition than those whose mothers were employed parttime. Students whose mothers were not employed during their elementary school years reported intermediate levels of ambition. No significant maternal employment by gender interaction effects were observed. No significant main nor interaction effects were observed on the item assessing the students' plans to have children.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

C. CHAMBLISS

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

CG032232

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Introduction

Early adolescence is an important developmental period. Goals established during these years shape many pivotal educational and social choices, which can influence the individual's life for decades to come. Differences among families play a role in the development of preadolescents' attitudes and aspirations. Family factors such as divorce, socioeconomic status, and parents' educational level have been construed as influential in shaping preadolescents' expectations. Maternal employment may also be viewed as variable that exerts an influence on youngsters and their feelings about appropriate adult roles. There is a need for research clarifying the relationship between a preadolescent's experience with a single versus two paycheck family and his or her view of the advantages and disadvantages of maternal employment, and professional and family aspiration. This is particularly important given the increasing participation of mothers in the workplace.

The United States Census Bureau reports that of the 3.7 million women with infants under the age of one in 1998, 59 percent of these women were in the labor force (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). This record high number is almost double the 31 percent of working women in 1976. By 1978, the United States Department of Labor reported that one-half of the mothers had joined the work force (United States of Labor, 1979). Less than two years later, the number of working mothers had surpassed the fifty percent mark (USDI, 1980). Families with working mothers are now the majority, and although this is the case, maternal employment has become a prominent social issue, and politicians, parenting experts and other social commentators have used maternal employment as the cause of many social problems. In many cases, both mothers who work and mothers who don't work feel as though they are damaging their children in some way. Although there are many claims of the negative effects of maternal employment, there is little evidence showing this to be true.

This study attempts to determine the feelings of the children themselves on the working mother, and whether these children had differing opinions based on their age, gender, mother's work status or their own future plans for a family. The professional ambitions of the child (i.e., expectancy of blue-collar employment vs. professional career) were also studied in relation to their childhood family structure and maternal employment status.

Impact of maternal employment has been studied from many different perspectives. Wright and Young (1998) found that children living in father-headed households (no mother present) had more traditional gender attitudes than children living in mother-headed households (no father present), who had more egalitarian attitudes. However, the study also found that regardless of the family structure of the household, children from households where the mother works had more egalitarian attitudes toward gender roles. Another finding of this study was the fact that males appear more affected by the working status of their mothers than by family structure, and females are affected both by family structure and maternal employment status.

The study's findings indicate that there does exist a difference in attitudes in males and females regarding gender roles, and that these attitudes can be influenced by various factors. However, females are more likely than males to be influenced by the existence of a father in the household, whereas males are more influenced by the working status of the mother. This shows that gender role attitudes of children can be passed down from parents, and the information found in the study indicates that future attitudes may change as family structures continue to change and maternal employment becomes even more prevalent.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Jackson and Tein (1998) found that older adolescent boys, compared to older girls and younger boys, agreed most with career having a negative effect on men and women in family and relationship roles. However, young adolescents who planned to be employed and whose mothers were employed outside the home disagreed with the negative effect of career. Girls generally agreed with the gender role equality concept, and older boys had greater disagreement with adult gender equality compared to older girls and younger boys. The gender and age effects may show that as boys get closer to the age of independence and begin visualizing themselves in the role of an adult, their conceptions of gender roles become more traditional. Girls held more egalitarian gender attitudes, regardless of age. Findings in this study indicate that when a mother works outside the home and therefore holds a dual commitment, the adolescent's perceptions of adulthood and beliefs of priorities and responsibilities in family roles is affected. The similarities in responses from girls and younger adolescent boys was most evident among those with immediate plans for work or marriage and those with employed mothers. Although this indicates a transition for boys from egalitarian views to more traditional views, it is not known at what age this transition takes place, or whether the point in which the mother started working outside the home has a relationship to the attitudes found.

Vander Ven et. al. (2001) studied the impact of maternal employment on adolescent delinquency and the impact of kids left home alone due to maternal employment. The direct effect of maternal employment was studied, as well as the effect of maternal employment on known delinquency risk factors, or "pathways to delinquency". The analysis suggested that maternal employment had no direct effect on delinquency, but did have an indirect impact on the delinquency pathways. There was a small effect of maternal employment on supervision of children, in that maternal employment in the culture of bureaucratic controls was related to lower supervision, and thus higher delinquency. There was little influence of maternal employment on any of the other known pathways to delinquency. This held true regardless of the age of the child when the mother was working. Also, the effects of race, sex and age showed no differences in the results. Also, neighborhood disorder is shown to be related to delinquent peer association, while maternal employment is not.

Montemayor (1984) explored the relationship between maternal employment and adolescents' relations with parents, siblings, and peers. Researchers have focused on prepubescent-aged children because it is believed that younger children maybe at jeopardy for a host of psychological and social problems due to the separation from their mother (Browlby, 1973). A recent view which focused particularly on adolescent development with working mothers in contrast to those with nonworking mothers, showed a difference in regard to their parent and peer involvement, level of academic success, sex role orientation, rate of delinquency, and degree of psychological modification (Montemayor and Clayton, 1983). It has been suggested that the connection between maternal employment and parent and peer relations during adolescence is inconsistent, but generally some adolescents have disagreeable relations with employed mothers, especially when the mother is working full-time. It has been reported that adolescents with working mothers were more involved in running the household and that they had a better relationship with their parents, as opposed to adolescence with nonworking mothers. In other studies adolescents reported more disagreements with their mothers and less involvement in school clubs and activities (Cogle et al., 1982; Douvan and Adelson, 1966; Gold and Andres, 1978; Propper, 1972). These findings are somewhat at odds with conservative wisdom about the significance of mothers to adolescents and the effects of maternal employment on adolescent growth.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Investigations of infancy have revealed that the relationship between one parent and a child could affect the relationship between the other parent and the child, which is known as the "second-order effect" (Belsky, 1981). Numerous studies have been researched on the effects of maternal employment in relation to mother and child with excluding relationships between father and siblings. The results of one study reported that husbands with working wives did not spend considerably more time in child care in contrast to those with nonworking wives (Pleck, 1983; Walker and Woods, 1976), while they did spend somewhat more play time with their children.

Males, but not females, had more arguments, which were of longer duration and greater intensity, with their mothers and siblings when their mothers worked than when they were homemakers. No connection was found between martial employment status and the number of males who had conflicts with their fathers or the number of females who reported conflicts with their mothers or fathers (Montemayor, 1984). For both males and females arguments with siblings were longer when mothers worked than when they were homemakers. Adolescents of both sexes spent less free time with their parents when their mothers worked, especially when they worked full-time, than when they were not employed. Males spent the most time alone when their mothers worked full time. The results of this study show that maternal employment status is linked to adolescents' associations with mothers, fathers, siblings, and peers. The data in this study suggested that adolescents perceive more conflict with mothers than mothers perceive with them. Working mothers expect more help around the house than nonworking mothers, which could cause accelerated conflict in the family. These findings imply that parent-adolescent relations in a family with a working mother are more focused on accomplishing home tasks at the cost of family recreation and play. When the mother is working the adolescent spends more time away from home with peers, which lessens the rate of interaction with the father.

It is becoming increasing clear that maternal employment is oftentimes positive for the development of girls and sometimes negative for boys (Bronfenbrenner and Crouter, 1982; Hoffman, 1980). Bronfenbrenner and his associates have shown that working mothers have a more optimistic view of their daughters than their sons, while the opposite is true for homemakers (Bronfenbrenner et al., 1984). These findings are associated with the increase in mother-son conflict and strengthen peer involvement by boys. Both of these facts may put some males at jeopardy for an assortment of peer-related problems.

Gardner and LaBrecque (1986) explored the effects of maternal employment in relation to the sex role orientation of adolescents. In the 1970's, researchers concentrated on the effects of maternal employment on various adolescent attitudes towards future life goals, career and educational ambitions, and sex role ideology (Bird, 1979). Tomeh (1979) determined that adolescent sons' attitudes toward female employment were favorable if their own mother worked. This study also found young women had a favorable non-traditional attitude towards women in the work force if their own mother worked.

Etaugh (1974) found no correlation between female juvenile delinquency and maternal employment. Nelson (1974) found that the majority of adolescent females with non-working mothers had a better adjustment score than those who had working mothers. In addition, the adolescent sons of full-time employed mothers were found to become better socially adjusted than those who had non-working mothers. Also, Hoffman (1974) found that there was a related difference in IQ scores for both female and males in upper-middle class families, relating to maternal employment. The author conveyed an association between nontraditional femininity and greater IQs in girls and the opposite was found for boys. In the "skilled labor" group of

employed mothers, the sons had higher school grades than the boys whose mothers were homemakers (Etaugh, 1974; Hoffman, 1974).

A longitudinal study administered to 110 women attending a four-year coeducational college found that the mothers of career-oriented women had more education and their fathers had higher status positions than the women who were not career-oriented. They also found a correlation between salient women and maternal employment. Students who had working mothers spoke spontaneously and favorably about their mother's employment during the interviews, and were in favor of combining career and marriage (Almquist and Agrist, 1971). Also, mother's occupation and experience alter her son's sex role attitudes (Tomeh, 1979). However, daughters intended to have the most open sex role orientation regardless of the maternal employment status and history. The sons' sex role orientation of employed mothers was influenced more in every category compared to the sons of non-employed mothers.

Haber (1980) discovered that parental encouragement was a leading factor in determining a daughter's career choice. Also, marital employment was not a major factor in determining a daughter's career choice, but it was suggested that the working mothers passed on greater choices and attitudes to their daughters. Likewise, Brogan and Kutner (1976) found that female undergraduates were more nontraditional in their sex role orientation if their mothers were in the work force than whose mothers were not. The difference was not statistically significant. It was reported that the higher the educational level of the mothers, the more nontraditional attitudes were passed on to the daughter.

Gardner and Labrecque (1976) researched the effects of maternal employment and sex role orientation on male and female high school students using maternal employment status as an independent variable, and found that adolescent attitudes towards sex roles are influenced by maternal employment. For instance, daughters who have mothers employed outside the home have a more liberal attitude toward the sex role orientation than sons whose mothers are employed. In addition, daughters who have working mothers are also more liberal than those daughters of homemakers. However, females may be influenced by factors other than maternal employment on the views of sex roles, such as role models. Also, sons of employed mothers have a more liberal attitude towards sex role orientation than sons of unemployed mothers.

In addition to attitudes, adolescent views are influenced by maternal employment in the division of the household tasks. For example, males and females both indicated that household tasks should be shared when both husband and wife work outside the home. However, when the wife is a homemaker it should be mainly her responsibility. In conclusion, it is evident that more daughters will be entering the workforce in the years to come, and sons will be married to employed wives. All in all, it is evident that society needs to be more liberal with attitudes toward marital employment for the welfare of families.

Burden (1986) explored the effects of single parents and the work setting in relation to the impact of multiple job and home responsibilities. In the United States one of the major factors facing single mothers and their children is poverty (McEaddy, 1976; Pearce, 1979; Ross & Sawhill, 1975). Employment to single parents becomes apparent when the link between poverty and unemployment is considered. Of those single parent families where the female head is not employed, 51% are in poverty, where she works part-time, 19% are in poverty, and where she works full-time, only 7% are in poverty (Smith, 1979). Employment is a leading factor broadening the physical, emotional and financial well-being of women. Working women are healthier, show more self esteem, freedom from emotional problems, greater longevity, and their

daughters have higher achievement patterns (Belle, 1982; Guttentag, N., Salasin, S; & Belle, D., 1980; Hofferth & Moore, 1979; Hoffman & Nye, 1974; Kanter, 1977).

Burden explores the effect on single parents with their multiple responsibilities of both job and home life on their own, addressing the effect of how single parents compare in job/homelife management with their married parent and nonparent colleaques at work. Much of the research on single parents has diverged on the female-headed family as a temporary family form and has l ed for negative effects on children in relation to child abuse, juvenile delinquency, e. otional/psychological problems, effects of poverty, welfare dependency, and maternal and paternal deprivation.

Overall results tend to point out that single female parents are at high risk for levels of job/family stress and decreased physical and emotional well-being. Married female parents ranked second, indicating that they spend about 10 more hours a week on home related responsibilities. Marriage appears to be a time consuming enterprise for female parents. Single male parents ranked third, reporting they did not have the same levels of stress in handling responsibilities of job and home compared to the other parent categories, possibly because they do not have their children living with them full-time. Single parents did not report significantly greater numbers of problems with children or more absenteeism from work than married parents. These findings tend to confute literature, which suggests greater problems with children to female-headed families. It would seem to confirm studies which suggests that, given sufficient income and support, a single parent can be as viable for children as a two parent family (Barry, 1979; Brandwein, 1974; Burden,1980). Male single parents spent the greatest amount of time at work, had the highest salaries, and had the lowest levels of depression of all the categories. Their responses seemed to be more comparable to non-parent employees than to parent employees. Single female parent employees reported almost no supply of income from their child(ren)'s other parent. In spite of the significant salary differences between males and females, single female parent employees demonstrated equal levels of job performance and job motivation as the other categories and higher levels of job satisfaction.

The current investigation assessed the relationship between maternal employment (full-time, part-time, and nonemployment) during three developmental periods (infancy, preschool years, and elementary school years) and preadolescents' attitudes toward maternal employment, relationships with their parents, self esteem, and professional and family ambitions. Inorder to enhance generalizability, preadolescents from both suburban and urban school settings were assessed.

Method

Subjects:

The subjects used in this study were 151 middle school students. The sample consisted of 40 males and 33 females from a sixth grade suburban classroom at Cinnaminson Middle School, Cinnaminson, New Jersey and 32 males and 44 females from a sixth grade urban classroom at Rush Middle School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The subjects ranged in age from 10 to 12 years old. Permission was obtained from parents for the students to participate in the study.

Procedure:

The packet used in this study was handed out to subjects in the sixth grade classroom. Subjects were asked to fill out the packet in its entirety. Ample time was given to the students to complete the questionnaire packet. The packet used in this study consisted of five different parts.

In part one, subjects were asked to provide demographic information and to answer questions concerning their career and family expectations. These questions required subjects to disclose information concerning their expectations about family plans, job type, job characteristics, and work preference based on the age of their youngest child. Subjects were also asked 10 questions concerning their attitudes toward their mother and father. These questions required subjects to indicate their degree of agreement with each statement on a 4 point Likert scale.

Part two of the packet was made up of the BACMEC questionnaire (Greenberger et al., 1988). The BACMEC is a 24-item scale developed to measure Beliefs About the Consequences of Maternal Employment for Children. The BACMEC included beliefs about both benefits (13 items) and costs (11 items). Studies of five samples (n=375) have demonstrated that the total BACMEC scale and its subscales are highly reliable and have good convergent, divergent, and concurrent validity (Greenberger et al., 1988).

In part three of the packet, subjects were asked to disclose information about their mother's work status at each stage of development. The stages of development were infancy (birth to 1 1/2 years old), preschool (2 to 5 years old), childhood (6 to 12 years old), and adolescence (13 to 18 years old). The subjects were asked to report whether their mothers were employed part-time, fulltime, or not employed outside the home during each stage of development. Subjects also disclosed information about their mother's job, indicating whether it was professional, white collar, or blue collar work. Subjects were also asked to indicate whether or not they had been raised in a single parent household.

Part four of the packet consisted of the CASR, the Revised Childhood Appraisal Scale (Chambliss, Owens, & Carr, 1991). The CASR is a 13-item questionnaire designed to measure the subject's perception of the consequences of their mother's work status. The subjects were asked to rate each item on a scale from 1 to 4 depending on how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each statement. The statements permitted subjects to indicate if they felt their lives would have been different if their mother's work status had been different when they were growing up. This allowed an assessment of the perceived impact of fulltime and part-time maternal employment, as well as unemployment.

The final part of the packet was the 10-item Rosenberg Self Concept Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), which was used to measure self esteem. Subjects were asked to indicate on a 4 point Likert format scale how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each statement (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree, 4=strongly agree). The statements assessed students' perceptions of self worth and competence.

Results

Directionally adjusted responses to the BACMEC were totaled for each participant to create two summary measures of attitudes toward maternal employment, one assessing perceived benefits and another assessing perceived costs. Summary scores indicating participants' evaluations of the quality of their current relationship with their mother were computed by adding the directionally adjusted items on the maternal relationship scale. Parallel summary

scores were calculated for ratings of relationships with father. Directionally adjusted items from the Rosenberg Self Concept Scale were similarly totaled to create a summary self-esteem score for each student. Students who reported a history of having lived in a single parent household were excluded from subsequent analyses.

Attitudes toward maternal employment, relationships with parents, and self esteem

A Oneway ANOVA (maternal employment during infancy) was performed in order to evaluate the relationship between maternal employment status during infancy (non-employment, part time employment, and fulltime employment) and students' perceptions of maternal employment costs and benefits to children, their current relationships with their parents, and students' self esteem. Significant differences on the Cost subscale were found among the maternal employment groups. Oneway ANOVA did not reveal significant differences among the groups in terms of the perceived benefits of maternal employment. Students whose mothers did not work at all perceived there as being greater costs associated with maternal employment than the students in the other two maternal employment groups (non-employment: $x=39.41$, $s.d.=10.23$, $n=58$, part time employment $x=39.63$,$s.d.=8.84$,$n=24$, and fulltime employment $x=31.00$, $s.d.=13.17$, $n=13$; $F=3.77$, $df=2/94$, $p<.05$).

Oneway ANOVA revealed no significant differences among the three maternal employment groups in the quality of their relationships with their mothers and/or fathers. There were also no significant differences in self esteem as a function of maternal employment background.

A Oneway ANOVA (maternal employment during preschool) was performed in order to evaluate the relationship between maternal employment status during preschool years (non-employment, part time employment, and fulltime employment) and students' perceptions of maternal employment costs and benefits to children, their current relationships with their parents, and students' self esteem. Significant differences on the Cost subscale were found among the maternal employment groups. No significant differences among the groups in terms of the perceived benefits of maternal employment wee observed. Students whose mothers did not work at all perceived there as being greater costs associated with maternal employment than the students in the other two maternal employment groups. (non-employment: $x=42.70$, $s.d.=8.05$,$n=30$, part time employment $x=37.67$,$s.d.=9.57$,$n=49$, and fulltime employment $x=32.44$, $s.d.=12.16$, $n=25$; $F=7.39$, $df=2/103$, $p<.01$). Oneway ANOVA indicated no significant group differences in quality of relationships with parents or self esteem.

A Oneway ANOVA (maternal employment during elementary school) was performed in order to evaluate the relationship between maternal employment status during elementary school (non-employment, part-time employment, and fulltime employment) and students' perceptions of maternal employment costs and benefits to children, their current relationships with their parents, and students' self esteem. Significant differences on the Cost subscale were found among the maternal employment groups. Oneway ANOVA revealed no significant differences among the groups in terms of the perceived benefits of maternal employment. Students whose mothers did not work perceived there as being greater costs to children associated with maternal employment than students in the other two maternal employment groups (non-employment: $x=44.65$,$s.d.=6.86$,$n=17$, part-time employment $x=39.53$,$s.d.=8.93$,$n=36$, and fulltime employment $x=34.86$, $s.d.=11.28$, $n=51$; $F=6.81$, $df=2/103$, $p<.01$). Maternal employment during

preschool was not significantly associated with quality of relationships with parents, nor with current level of self esteem.

Professional and family size ambitions

Three between-subjects 3 x 2 MANOVA were conducted to determine the relationship between maternal employment (full-time, part-time, non-employment) during different stages of the child's life (infancy, preschool, and elementary school years) and gender and the child's professional and family size ambitions.

A significant gender main effect was found for level of occupational ambition. Female students reported a higher level of ambition than their male counterparts (females: mean=1.35, s.d.=.60, n=46 versus males: mean=1.64, s.d.=.71, n=45; F=4.18, df=1/86, p<.05). Maternal employment during infancy and preschool years was not significantly associated with level of professional ambition. However, maternal employment during the elementary school years did relate significantly to students' occupational aspirations. Respondents whose mothers were employed full-time during their elementary school-age years showed a significantly higher level of professional ambition than those whose mothers were employed part-time. Students whose mothers were not employed during their elementary school years reported intermediate levels of ambition. No significant maternal employment by gender interaction effects were observed.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Non-employment	1.56	.51	16
Part-time	1.77	.86	30
Full-time	1.30	.51	46

F=5.35; df=2/92; p<.01

Note: Low scores indicate high level of professional aspiration

No significant main nor interaction effects were observed on the item assessing the students' plans to have children. Correlational analyses revealed that self-esteem was significantly associated with occupational ambition (r=.35, p<.01). In addition, ratings of parents were significantly correlated (r=.32; p<.01).

Discussion

The findings strongly suggest that preadolescents whose mothers do not work outside the home are more likely to perceive maternal employment as being unfavorable for children. Children of mothers who worked either fulltime or parttime were much less likely to perceive there as being substantial costs associated with maternal employment. This conclusion was evident regardless of the developmental period (infancy, preschool years, or elementary school years) during whoich mothers worked outside the home. This may suggest that children tend to most value whatever experiences their own families provided them. Loyalty to parental choice may account for why the offspring of mothers who opted to remain at home with their children perceive greater costs as being associated with any alternative to this lifestyle. Similarly, children whose own mothers worked (fulltime or parttime) may have rated the costs as being less seriously as a result of their needing to defend their parents' choices.

Another possibility is that the students whose mothers did not work, lacking personal experience with maternal employment, are more likely to echo popular alarmist myths about the risks associated with maternal employment. Without personal evidence to the contrary, they endorse beliefs common among many adults about the price children pay for their mothers' decisions to work. Consistent with this reasoning, the children of employed mothers may have adjusted their attitudes in light of their own failure to encounter obstacles as a result of their mothers' working.

A final possibility is that the children whose mothers stayed at home have a keener understanding of the costs associated with maternal employment because they are more aware of what they might have sacrificed had their mothers' choice been different. According to this line of reasoning, children of nonemployed mothers are in a privileged position for evaluating the costs associated with maternal employment.

The failure to observe any significant differences among the maternal employment groups in perceptions of the benefits associated with maternal employment is of interest. Future research might seek to clarify this apparent asymmetry.

The failure to find significant differences in the quality of parental relationships or self esteem as a function of maternal employment background seems to challenge the widespread assumption that mothers who work outside the home do so at considerable expense to their children's relational well-being and self concept. Additional data on samples of different ages may help to assess the representativeness of this finding.

The findings from this study also indicated that female preadolescents, overall, reported higher levels of professional ambition than males, regardless of the work status of their mother. The reason for this warrants future study, but this finding may be attributed to the fact that there are now more female role models with professional occupations for adolescent girls to observe and emulate. Television, movies, marketing campaigns, etc., serve to expose young girls to independent, professional women, and offer less emphasis on traditional female roles than in the past. Although males have always been encouraged to envision a life of full-time work as adults, females still are presented this possibility as an exciting, somewhat new, privilege that they should enjoy. A female adolescent may believe that she must take advantage of this new cultural role in order not to let those predecessor trailblazers down. Also, with the two-income family and all its material possessions being much more prevalent these days, female adolescents are exposed to a lifestyle that requires dual employment in order to be maintained.

The fact that respondents whose mothers worked full-time during the child's elementary school years had significantly higher professional ambition than those whose mothers worked part-time leads to interesting speculation. One reason for this may be that elementary school aged children are more likely than younger children to notice the structure of their family and how it compares to that of other children. In elementary school, a child realizes the differences in households, and knows that some mothers work outside the home and some do not. If a child, at this time where he begins to notice what is going on around him, sees his mother working full-time, he sees his own household and family as the "norm", and is more likely to aspire to the same lifestyle as that to which he is accustomed. They see working as working full-time. On the other hand, if a child at this age notices a mother working part-time, he is likely to realize that this mother works less than some other mothers do, and therefore perhaps working isn't something that is really necessary. They see less time and energy spent on a job or career, and therefore may be less likely to aspire to a high-profile professional occupation. Or, they may see their mother at home more, with more time to spend with the children and their activities, and

may decide that they do not want to give up that kind of time with their own children. The fact that those children whose mothers did not work at all had intermediate levels of professional ambition may suggest that they see the world as having some mothers working and some mothers not, and form variable opinions about what they want for themselves in the future. This group's intermediate level of ambition may also be due to a combination of some of them wanting to achieve professionally in order to vindicate their mother's devotion to their optimal development, and some of them identifying with their mothers' family-centered values in a manner which makes them deemphasize the importance professional success.

References

Almquist, E., & Angrist, S. (1971). Role model influences on college women's career aspirations. Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 17, 263-279.

Aseltine, R. (1995). "A reconsideration of parental and peer influences on adolescent deviance." Journal of Health and Social Behavior 36:103-121.

Barling, J. (1990). Employment, Stress, and Family Functioning. Chichester, England: John Wiley.

Barry, A. (1979). Research project on successful single parent families. American Journal of Family Therapy, 7, 65-73.

Baydar, N., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (1991). Effects of maternal employment and child-care arrangements on preschooler's cognitive and behavioral outcomes. Developmental Psychology, 27, 932-945.

Belle, D. (Ed.) (1962) Lives in stress: Women and depression. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Bird, C. The Two Paycheck Marriage. New York: Rawson Wade Publishers, 1979.

Bohen, H.H., & Viveros-Long A. (1961). Balancing jobs and family life: Do flexible work schedules help? Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Brandwein, R.A., Brown, C.A., & Fox, E,M. (1974). Women and children last: The social situation of divorced mothers and their families. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 36, 498-514.

Braverman, L. B. (1989). Beyond the myth of motherhood. In M. McGoldrick, C. M. Anderson, & E Walsh (Eds.), Women and families. New York: Free Press.

Brogan, D., Kutner, N.G. Measuring sex-role orientation: A normative approach. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1976, 42, 31-39.

Bronlenbrenner, U., Alvarez. W.F., and Henderson, C.R. (1984). Working and watching: Maternal employment status and parents' perception of their three-year old children. Child Dev. 55: 1362-1378.

Brubaker, T.H., & Keith, P.M. Sex-role expectations associated with specific household tasks: Perceived age and employment differences. Psychological Reports, 1977, 41, 15-18.

Burden, D. (1980). Women as single parents: Alternative services for a neglected population. In N. Gottlieb (Ed.) Alternative social services for women (pp. 255-279). New York: Columbia University Press.

Burden, D. (1983). The interaction of job and homelife responsibilities: A comparison of married and single parent employees. (Doctoral dissertation, Heller School, Brandeis University, 1983). Dissertation Abstracts International.

Burden, Diane S. "Single Parents and the Work Setting: The Impact of Multiple Job and Homelife Responsibilities". Family Relations. 35 (1986): 37-43.

Burley, K. A. (1995). Family variables as mediators of the relationship between work-family conflict and marital adjustment among dual-career men and women. The Journal of Social Psychology, 4, 483-498. Retrieved on November 26, 2001from Expanded Academic ASAP (Info Trac) on the World Wide Web; http://www.infotrac.galegroup.com/itweb/.

Chase-Lansdale, P. L., & Owen, M. T. (1987). Maternal employment in a family context: Effect on infant-mother and infant-father attachments. Child Development, 58, 1505-1512.

Chao, E. L. (2001). Report on the American Workforce. U.S. Department of Labor.

Chira, S. 1998 A Mother's Place. New York: HarperCollins.

Citizens' Advisory Council on the Status of Women. (1972). The Equal Rights Amendment and Alimony and Child Support Laws (Memorandum). Washington, DC.

Cogle, F.I., Tasker G.E., and Morton, D. G. (1982). Adolescent time use in household work. Adolescence 17: 451-455.

Coontz, S. 1997 The Way We Really Are: Coming to Terms With America's Changing Families. New York: Basic Books.

Douvan, E., and Adelson, J. (1966). The Adolescent Experience, Wiley, New York.

Duncan, O.D. (1961). A socioeconomic index for all occupations. In Reiss, A.J., Jr. (ed.), Occupations and Social Status, Free Press, Glencoe, III.

Eiden, R., D. Teti, and K. Corns 1995 "Maternal working models of attachment, marital adjustment, and the parent-Child Relationship." Child Development 66:1504-1518.

Etaugh, C. (1974). Effect of maternal employment on children: A review of recent research. Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 20, 71-98.

Eyer, D. 1996 Motherguilt: How Our Culture Blames Mothers for What's Wrong with Society. New York: Random House.

Faludi, S. 1991 Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women. New York: Crown.

Farnworth, M. 1984 "Family structure, family attributes, and delinquency in a sample of low-income, minority males and females." Journal of Youth and Adolescence 13:349-364.

Galambos, N. L., Petersen, A. C., Richards, M., & Gitelson, I.B. (1985). The Attitudes Towards Women Scale for Adolescents (AWSA); A study of reliability and validity. Sex Roles, 13, 343-356.

Gardner, Kaye E. & LaBrecque, Suzanne V. "Effects of Maternal Employment on Sex Role Orientation of Adolescence." Adolescence, XXI No. 84, (1986): 875-885.

Gibbons, J. L., Stiles, D. A., & Shkodriani, G. M. (1991). Adolescents' attitudes toward family and gender roles: An international comparison. Sex Roles, 25, 625-643.

Gill, R. 1993 "Family breakdown as public policy." Public Interest 110:77-84.

Glass, J. (1992). Housewives and employed wives: Demographic and attitudinal change, 1972-1986. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 54(3), 559-569.

Glick, P.C., & Norton, A. (1980). New lifestyles change family statistics. American Demographics, 2, 20-23.

Glueck, S. and E. Glueck 1950 Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. 1988 "Beliefs about the consequences of maternal employment for children." Psychology of Women Quarterly 12:35-59.

Greenberger, E., Goldberg, W.A., Crawford, T.J., & Granger, J. (1988). Beliefs about the consequences of maternal employment for children. Psychology of Women Quarterly, 12, 35-59.

Gultenberg, M., Salasin, S., & Belle, D. (1980). The mental health of women. NY: Academic Press.

Haber, S. Cognitive support for the career choices of college women. Sex Roles, 1980, 6, 129-138.

Harvey, E. 1999 "Long-term effects of early parental employment on children of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth." Developmental Psychology 35:445-459.

Heaton, T. B., Chadwick, B. A., & Jacobson, C. K. (2000). Statistical Handbook on Racial Groups in the United States. Phoenix: Oryx Press.

Hill, J.P., and Lynch, M.E. (1983). The intensification of gender-related role expectations during early adolescence. In Brooks-Gunn, J., and Petersen, A. C. (eds.). Girls at Puberty, Plenum, NY.

Hillman, S. and S. Sawilowsky 1991 "Maternal employment and early adolescent substance use." Adolescence 26:829-837.

Hoffman, L.W. (1989). Effects of maternal employment in the two-parent family. American Psychologist, 44, 283-292.

Hoffman, L.W. Effects of maternal employment on the child: A review of the research. Developmental Psychology, 1974, 10, 204-228.

Hoffman, L.W. (1980). The effects of maternal employment on the academic attitudes and performance of school-aged children. School Psychol. Rev. 9: 319-335.

Hoffman, L.W. (1986). Work, family and the child. In M.S. Pallak & R.O. Perloff (Eds.) Psychology and Work: Productivity, Change, and Employment. (173-220) Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Hoffman, L.W. (1983). Work, family and the socialization of the child. In Parke, R.D. (ed.), Review of Child Development Research, vol. 7, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Hoffman, L.W., & Nye, F.I. (1974). Working mothers. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Jackson, D.W. & Tein, J-Y. (1998) Adolescents' conceptualization of adult roles: relationships with age, gender, work goal, and maternal employment. Sex Roles: A Journal of Research, v38 n11-12 p987(22)

Johnson, B.L. (1978). Women who head families, 1970-77: Their numbers rose, income lagged. Monthly Labor Review, 101, 32-37.

Kahn, R. L. (1981). Work, stress and individual well-being. Monthly Labor Review, 104, 28-30.

Kanter, R. M. (1977). Work and family in the United States. A critical review and agenda for research and policy. New York: Russell Sage.

Keith, R M. (1988). The relationship of self-esteem, maternal employment and work-family plans to sex role orientations of late adolescents. Adolescence, 23(92), 959-966.

Kunz, J. & Kalil, A. (1999). Self-esteem, self-efficacy, and welfare use. Social Work Research, 23, 119-127.

Lamb, M.E. (1982). Maternal employment and child development. In Lamb, M. E., (ed.), Nontraditional families: Parenting and Child Development, Lawrence Erilbaum, Hillsdale, N.J.

Massad, C. M. (1981). Sex role identity and adjustment during adolescence. Child Development, 52, 1290-1298.

McEaddy, B.J. (1976). Women who head families: A socioeconomic analysis. Monthly Labor Review.

McLeod, J., C. Kruttschnitt, and M. Dornfeld 1994 "Does parenting explain the effects of structural conditions on children's antisocial behavior? A comparison of blacks and whites." Social Forces 73:575-604.

Menaghan, E. and T. Parcel 1991 "Determining children's home environments: The impact of maternal characteristics and current occupational and family conditions." Journal of Marriage and the Family 53:417-431.

Moen, P. & Dempster-McClain, D. I. (1987). Employed parents: role strain, work time, and preferences for working less. Journal of Marriage and the Family,49, 579-590.

Montemayor, R. (1982). The relationship between parent-adolescent conflict the amount of time adolescents spend alone with parents and peers. Child Dev. 53: 1512-1529.

Montemayor, R. (1983). Parents and adolescents in conflict: All families some of the time and some families most of the time. J Early Adoles. 3: 83-103.

Montemayor, R., and Clayton, M.D. (1983). Maternal employment and adolescent development. Theory Practice 22: 112-118.

Montemayor, Raymond. "Maternal Employment and Adolescents' Relations with Parents, Siblings, and Peers." Journal of Youth and Adolescence 13 (1984): 543-557.

Muller, C. 1995 "Maternal employment, parent involvement, and mathematics achievement among adolescents." Journal of Marriage and the Family 57:85-100.

Nelso, D. D. A study of personality adjustment among adolescent children with working and non-working mothers. Journal of Educational Research, 1971, 64, 1328-1330.

Nye, I.F., & Hoffman L.W. The employed mother in America. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963.

O'Neil, R. (1989). Facilitating children's academic achievement.' Does maternal employment matter? Paper presented at the 97th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, New Orleans, LA.

Parcel, T. and B. Menaghan 1994 Parents' Jobs and Children's Lives. New York: Aldine De Gruyter.

Parcel, T. and E. Menaghan 1994a "Early parental work, family social capital, and early childhood outcomes." American Journal of Sociology 99:972-1009.

Paulson, S. E., Komin, J. J., III,& Hill, J. E (1990). Maternal employment and parent-child relations in families of seventh graders. Journal of Early Adolescence, 10, 279-295.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: The relationship between maternal employment and preadolescents' Attitudes and Ambitions	
Author(s): Gorton, L., McCauley, J., Farrell, D., Nyce, S., Johnson, L. et al.	
Corporate Source: Ursinus College	Publication Date: 2003

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic/optical media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS) or other ERIC vendors. Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following two options and sign at the bottom of the page.

	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2 documents	
☒ Check here **For Level 1 Release:** Permitting reproduction in microfiche (4" x 6" film) or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic or optical) *and* paper copy.	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Sample TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Sample TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)	☐ Check here **For Level 2 Release:** Permitting reproduction in microfiche (4" x 6" film) or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic or optical), but *not* in paper copy.
	Level 1	**Level 2**	

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits. If permission to reproduce is granted, but neither box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

"I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic/optical media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries."

Sign here→ please	Signature:	Printed Name/Position/Title: Catherine Chambliss, Ph.D., Chair, Psychology	
	Organization/Address: Dept. of Psychology Ursinus College Collegeville, PA 19426	Telephone: (610) 409 3000	FAX: (610) 489 0627
		E-Mail Address: cchambliss@ursinus.edu	Date: 3/3/03

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, *or*, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Processing and Reference Facility
1301 Piccard Drive, Suite 100
Rockville, Maryland 20850-4305

Telephone: 301-258-5500
FAX: 301-948-3695
Toll Free: 800-799-3742
e-mail: ericfac@inet.ed.gov